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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 TEL AVIV 002388

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

NEA FOR BURNS/SATTERFIELD
NEA/SA/EX FOR AUSTIN-FERGUSON; DEPT FOR DS/IP/NEA;
DEPT FOR DS/IP/ITA; DRL FOR A/S CRANER;
NSC FOR ABRAMS/DANIN;
USAID FOR DCHA, DCHA/FPP

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KWBG](#) [PTER](#) [ASEC](#) [PHUM](#) [CASC](#) [KPAL](#) [IS](#) [GZ](#)

SUBJECT: THE SITUATION ON THE GROUND: APRIL 26, 2004 --
(1300 HOURS LOCAL) -- ONE BORDER GUARD KILLED AND THREE
WOUNDED APRIL 25 IN WEST BANK ATTACK

THIS IS A JOINT MESSAGE FROM EMBASSY TEL AVIV AND CONGEN
JERUSALEM.

SUMMARY

1. (SBU) Summary: Palestinian gunmen killed one Israeli border policeman and wounded three others April 25 near Idna village in the West Bank. The al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades claimed responsibility for the attack. Also on April 25, an Israeli undercover unit killed two al-Aqsa militants and wounded a third in Janin; a civilian bystander was also killed. In the Gaza Strip, IDF soldiers shot and injured four Palestinians April 24-25, and Palestinians injured two settlers April 25 in a rocket attack on Netzarim. Gazans turned out to demonstrate in support of Yasir Arafat April 24-25, after statements by PM Sharon that he no longer felt bound by his commitment to the United States not to target the PA chairman. End Summary.

West Bank

2. (SBU) ATTACKS:

-- Death/Injury: Palestinian gunmen killed one Israeli border policeman April 25 near Idna village, west of Hebron. Three other border policemen were wounded in the attack. The gunmen escaped; al-Aqsa Martyrs, Brigades claimed responsibility for the shooting.

-- Death: Palestinians killed a suspected collaborator April 25 in Bayt Rima village.

-- Death: An Israeli undercover unit killed two al-Aqsa Brigades members and wounded a third in Janin April 25. A civilian bystander was also killed.

-- Death: An Israeli undercover unit killed one PIJ member and wounded another in Qabatiya April 25.

-- Death: al-Aqsa Brigades members killed a collaborator April 23 in Tulkarem.

-- Injury: The IDF injured five Palestinians during clashes in Nablus April 25.

-- Injury: The IDF injured four Palestinians April 26 during clashes in Bayt Sahour. The IDF entered Bayt Sahour in response to a shooting attack mounted from the village against Har Homa settlement (see "Shooting").

-- Shooting: Palestinian gunmen fired shots at Har Homa settlement south of Jerusalem April 26 from the direction of Bayt Sahour village, east of Bethlehem. No one was injured in the incident.

-- Shooting: Palestinian gunmen fired shots from Bayt Jala village at Gilo settlement, south of Jerusalem, April 25, but no one was injured. The IDF subsequently imposed a curfew on Bayt Jala, which was still in effect as of the morning of April 26, and entered the village to conduct searches.

3. (SBU) ARRESTS:

-- Palestinian sources reported that two international peace activists, one of whom was reportedly American, were detained by Israeli forces April 25 during a protest against the separation barrier near Biddu village, northwest of Jerusalem. The IDF used tear gas to disperse the demonstrators.

-- Israeli police announced the arrest April 25 of three Palestinians suspected of killing one person and wounding

another in two separate shooting attacks in East Jerusalem over the past month. Two of the suspects are from Kafr Aqab, and one is from Ramallah.

-- The IDF arrested six Palestinians throughout the West Bank April 25.

Gaza

14. (SBU) ATTACKS:

-- Deaths: Nil.

-- Injuries: Israeli media reported that two settlers were lightly wounded April 25 in Netzarim when Palestinians fired homemade rockets at the settlement.

-- Injury: One Palestinian was shot and injured April 25 when the IDF fired on the Khan Yunis refugee camp, according to UNRWA (see "Shootings").

-- Injuries: UNRWA reported that a 15-year-old Palestinian boy was moderately wounded April 23 when the bomb he was making exploded prematurely in Burayj camp. His two sisters were also wounded by shrapnel in the blast.

-- Injury: UNRWA reported that a 60-year-old Palestinian man and a 12-year-old Palestinian girl were shot and seriously wounded April 23 in two separate incidents of IDF fire into Block O of the Rafah refugee camp (see "Shootings").

-- Injury: One Palestinian was shot and injured April 23 when IDF soldiers fired at a group of farmers working north of Karni Crossing (see "Shootings").

-- Mortars/Rockets/Hand Grenades: The IDF reported that 11 mortar shells and one anti-tank missile were fired at settlements and IDF outposts April 24-16.

-- Shootings: The IDF reported a total of three shooting attacks initiated by Palestinians against IDF targets April 24-26, and another three IDF-initiated shootings in the same time frame. One Palestinian was wounded in each of the IDF-initiated shooting incidents, according to the IDF.

15. (SBU) ARRESTS:

-- UNRWA reported that the IDF arrested one Palestinian from the Jabaliyah refugee camp April 23 at the Abu Khouli checkpoint during routine vehicle checks.

16. (SBU) BORDER CROSSINGS/CHECKPOINTS:

-- Route Four (Salahadeen Road), the main north-south traffic artery, was open for Palestinians.

-- Erez Crossing and the Erez Industrial Zone were both closed April 24-26.

-- Sufa Crossing was closed for Palestinian laborers April 24-26. Sufa was also closed for the import into Gaza of aggregates used in construction.

-- Karni Terminal was open April 24 for the import and export of goods into the Gaza Strip, but closed April 25.

-- Rafah Terminal was open April 24-25 for Palestinian travelers.

-- Tel al-Sultan checkpoint was closed April 24-26. Toufah checkpoint was open for residents of al-Mowassi April 24-26.

17. (SBU) POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS:

-- PM Sharon said in a speech April 23 that he no longer feels bound by his commitment to the United States not to target PA Chairman Yasir Arafat. Following Sharon's statements, UNRWA reported that approximately 5,000 Fatah supporters, PA officials and armed men marched from the PLC compound to the Presidential Office in Gaza April 24 in a show of support for PA Chairman Yasir Arafat. Additional demonstrations in support of Arafat were held throughout the Gaza Strip April 24-25.

-- Approximately 25,000 Palestinians held a rally April 23 in the Khan Yunis stadium to commemorate the death of former Hamas leader Abdul al-Aziz al-Rantisi.

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KURTZER